

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

September 25, 2012

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on September 25, 2012, pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Committee Chairman, Dale Venturini, Joseph DeLorenzo, Jeffrey Hirsh and Bernie Buonanno.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kim Keough and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; John McGinn, Greg Barbeau and Amanda Wilmouth, RICC; Martha Sheridan, Kristin McGrath and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Daniel Schwartz, VETS; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen and Kaitlyn Bizier, DDC and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August Marketing Committee meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. DeLorenzo and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the August meeting.

RICCA

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Keough to update the committee on public relations for the complex. Ms. Keough distributed her report and noted that her team has been working on an RFP for our website upgrades. Ms. Keough said that they are looking at ways to promote the NCAA Men's Division 1 Hockey Regional Tournament have asked Projo to run an insert the week of the event. She also said that Projo has been asked to run Providence College and Brown Hockey scores throughout the season to build excitement for the event. Ms. Keough stated that the Hood Cook Off will take place on October 21st in the Convention Center and she said that the event would be cross promoted with the Convention Center staff as well as the promoter of the Cook Off. Ms. Keough listed upcoming events at the Dunkin' Donuts Center and several cross promotional opportunities with the P. Bruins. Ms. Keough reported that the VETS has events that are being promoted with Providence College. She said that she has been assisting Providence College with promoting Regina Spektor and Primus. Ms. Keough said that she has offered our assistance to the Russian Ballet, Red Green, BeanTown Swing Orchestra, Won't Back Down Premier. Ms. Keough noted that marketing collateral such as spec sheets, inserts in playbills and rack cards are some of the things that can be done with the limited amount of public relations dollars that have been budgeted. Ms. Keough presented a quick view of the 2012 media results to date that indicate \$1,410,606 in television ad equivalency. Ms. Venturini thanked Ms. Keough for her report.

Mr. McCarvill reported that Ms. Carter is concerned about the lack of literature on the VETS. Ms. Keough said that the VETS is featured on our website and PPAC's website. Ms. Keough noted that hits on other social media outlets are gaining ground. Ms. Venturini said that she understands the importance of social media but she also likes something on paper as well. Mr. Hirsh noted that it makes sense to mail information and include flyers for coming events to the patrons in attendance. Ms. Venturini suggested getting a list of patrons from the Philharmonic. Mr. McCarvill stated that the Philharmonic will not supply the list. Ms. Venturini commented that she understands that it may be a privacy issue. Mr. Hirsh stated that the renovations are doing a great deal for the Philharmonic and maybe they should rethink their position. Mr. Schwarts stated that the Philharmonic wants complete control over ticket sales and they are reluctant to promote other events.

PWCVB

Ms. Venturini recognized Kristin McGrath and asked her to present the sales report for the PWCVB. Ms. McGrath stated that the hotels had a terrific August with occupancy at 79.2% and the average daily rate rising to \$139.72. Ms. McGrath said that Providence hotels enjoyed a 5.1% occupancy rate and a 6.4% rate increase over the same period last year. Ms. McGrath noted definite booking highlights include the International Workers' Compensation Foundation, Aim High Academy RI Invitational, NE Educational Opportunity

Association, International Ford Retractable Club and the Federal Highway Administration. Ms. Venturini asked Ms. McGrath to explain to Mr. DeLorenzo tentative bookings. Ms. McGrath said that tentative bookings are those that we have contacted and proposed the destination and that have shown interest in bringing their group to the area. Mr. DeLorenzo asked what percentage of tentative groups is closed. Ms. McGrath answered that between 29 and 32% of our tentative groups sign contracts. Ms. McGrath stated that the CVB had participated in the MPI Southeast Conference & Tradeshow, the American Society of Association Executives and Connect Marketplace. Ms. McGrath said that CVB sales associates attend conventions, meetings and tradeshow that have booked our destination for a future event in order to more fully understand the needs of the client. Ms. Venturini asked that if part of the sales pitch is the fact that we can support and advertise events. Ms. Adamo said that all of our assets are used in the sales pitch. Ms. Adamo presented the Marketing and Communications report. Ms. Adamo stated that a new e-blast program/splash page for the meetings market was created. Ms. Adamo also reported that a promotional video for the Rock N Roll Marathon was developed that received 1,100 views on YouTube and the CVB promoted Carrie Underwood with giveaways on Facebook/Twitter. Ms. Adamo echoed Ms. Keough's report saying the CVB is assisting the Hood Dairy Cookoff with public relations and judge recruitment, coordinating public relations efforts for appearances on the Rhode Show for SNAME, NEBC Expo and working with the Providence Business News on a story about groups

that have left other states for Rhode Island. Ms. Adamo reported that she is working with Providence College Basketball to promote game attendance to meeting and convention attendees. Ms. Adamo said that she has met with local colleges to reach out to students, parents and alumni to promote events in the City. Ms. Adamo noted that she met with New England Turfgrass to come up with ideas to increase business. Ms. Venturini stated that she had visited the CVB's new offices. Ms. Sheridan said that an open house is being planned after they are settled.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Cohen reported that the marketing team will be meeting with NCAA Hockey to discuss ticket sales to the upcoming tournament. Ms. Cohen also stated that Rick Ross tickets will be going on sale on Friday, September 28th. Ms. Cohen presented a new mobile application to enhance the fan experience at the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Ms. Cohen said that the Wireless Fan Network had a trial run at the Dunk and although there were some glitches she sees great potential for the program. Ms. Cohen noted that WFN is based in Providence and is the leading provider of interactive software to enhance the patron experience. Ms. Cohen stated that food can be ordered from your seat, purchase merchandise from your Smartphone, purchase tickets for upcoming events, instant replays and many other applications. Ms. Cohen described the WFN features and services and the benefits of WFN. She said that WFN is a state of

the art wireless network that could be a source of incremental revenue. Ms. Cohen said that we can tailor programs for specific customer requirements and report on patron interactions and purchases. Mr. DeLorenzo asked if food is delivered to your seat do you supply the seat number. Ms. Cohen said that you can order from a concession stand and pick up the order when ready, seat delivery or request a specific vender (ice cream, cotton candy, etc) to come to your section. Mr. McCarvill asked if there is an up charge. Ms. Cohen answered that there is not. Mr. McCarvill asked what is in it for us. Ms. Venturini stated that it will cause a buzz and increase sales. Ms. Cohen said that this is being done at no cost to us and the company will control the ad space. Mr. Hirsh asked if this is a start up company or a spin off. Ms. Cohen stated that it is a start up company and reiterated that they are based in Rhode Island.

RICC

Ms. Venturini asked Mr. McGinn to update the committee on events at the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn presented the revenue goals for the fiscal year and said that we had an increase of \$281,597 in the month of August. Mr. McGinn stated that August was a great month of the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn reported that the Convention Center is negotiating for several tentative events such as SNAME Expo & Conference, C4 Providence and PKU Patient Event. Mr. McGinn highlighted contracted events, the 2012 Third Goal Expo, Vertex's Annual VTX-ML User Group Meeting, ACHUO-I that consists

of a business operations conference, a housing facilities conference and living learning conference. Mr. McGinn reported that the sales team traveled to CONNECT in New Orleans. Several site tours took place during the month. Mr. McGinn noted that because of our relationship with Brown University we have been host to many Brown events. He said that the Dalai Lama will be appearing at the Convention Center in October. Mr. McGinn noted that a site tour for NAVIKA was held in August. He said that this is an Indian group that will pose some challenges. Mr. McCarvill asked if this is another group where we need special food. Mr. McGinn answered that it does and that the chef is becoming good at Indian cuisine. Ms. Venturini said that she has a staff member that is versed in Indian cuisine and is willing to help if needed. Mr. McCarvill asked if we could bid on and host CONNECT or Rejuvenate. Ms. Sheridan stated that we are capable of hosting these events but it would require a giant check. Ms. Wilmouth noted that we have the rooms that would be required. Ms. Sheridan said that she would get the specs. Mr. Hirsh commented that everyone is a potential customer and asked if it would be likely that the hotels would give a special rate. Ms. Sheridan responded that it would depend on the time of year that the event was being held.

VETS

Ms. Venturini recognized Dan Schwartz, General Manager of the VETS. Mr. Schwartz was pleased to report that the VETS will host a

Live Nation concert for the first time. Ms. Venturini noted that Viola Davis announced on the Ellen show yesterday that she will be appearing at a showing of her new movie "Won't Back Down" at the VETS. Discussion ensued regarding the financial issues that we have had with the ballet. Mr. Schwartz stated that he has worked out a payment plan with the ballet that will be beneficial to the VETS. Discussion then turned to the Philharmonic ticket sales. Mr. McCarvill asked how we let them sell their own tickets. Mr. Schwartz noted that the ticket problem existed before he was named General Manager. Mr. McCarvill said that we need to look for a better way. Ms. Venturini said that the same issues exist with PC. Mr. Hirsh suggested that we invite the director and any other members to one of our meetings. Ms. Venturini said that we should sit down with them and resolve our concerns.

Mr. Bennett stated that he is pleased with the way things are going and noted that we are always open to new ideas.

Ms. Venturini asked if there was any further business. Hearing none Ms. Venturini looked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. DeLorenzo and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:46 PM